

COMMISSION PRIORITIES FOR CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION GIVEN THE STATE'S CURRENT FISCAL CONSTRAINTS

The anticipated State budgetary reductions will impact the ability of California's public colleges and universities to provide high quality education opportunities to all eligible students. During this time of fiscal constraint and the prospect that State funding for higher education will be significantly reduced, the Commission recommends that the following should be the highest priorities for California's public colleges and universities:

- Provide as many students as possible with access to high quality educational programs and services;
- Ensure that student financial aid funds are adequately increased to cover student fee increases for all financially needy students;
- Recognize that undergraduate education is a higher priority than graduate and professional degree programs during times of fiscal constraint;
- Maintain efforts to increase the racial-ethnic diversity of students enrolled in the State's public colleges and universities such that their student populations better reflect the racial-ethnic composition of the State's total population;
- Maintain adequate course offerings and student support services to ensure that all students – but particularly undergraduate students – can in a timely manner succeed and complete their educational objectives; and
- Ensure that all California Community College students who seek to transfer at the upper-division level to the State's public universities are accommodated and provided with access to at least one of the State's public universities.

FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING THE STATE BUDGETARY REDUCTIONS

To ensure that budgetary reductions are implemented in a manner that protects access and diversity to the greatest possible extent and treats all constituencies of the higher education community (including faculty, staff, and students) in a fair and equitable manner, the Postsecondary Education Commission recommends that the State and its higher education systems develop specific plans for addressing the anticipated budgetary reductions that adhere to the priorities outlined and the suggested budgetary reduction framework that follows:

- At least one-third of the budget reductions should be absorbed by the institutions through improvements in their operating productivity and efficiency;
- No more than one-third of the budget reductions should be implemented through the elimination, reduction, and/or curtailment in the number and/or scope of programs and services offered by the institutions; and
- No more than one-third of the budget reductions should be addressed through increases in student fees.